

9.11.2001

september 11th: lessons learned



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foreword

In the hours and days immediately following the attacks, it became clear that nothing would ever be the same. The world of philanthropy was no exception, and the tremendous, unprecedented outpouring of financial and in-kind support was unlike anything we had ever seen. The September 11th terrorist attacks and the response of the American people have taught us all a great deal. Still, there is much to learn in the post-9/11 environment. We at Washington Grantmakers have learned three key lessons from the past year.

The first is the importance of reaching out into the community and forming relationships with area funders, nonprofits, government leaders, and media. Organizations must be committed to establishing relationships that they can rely on in the future. In Washington, that collaboration and coordination proved essential in organizing and managing the philanthropic sector's response.

Secondly, organizations involved in the relief efforts need to document and communicate their response. Not only is this crucial to developing institutional knowledge and best practices, but it is also key to public accountability. Individual contributions account for the bulk of the financial resources that allow organizations to do their work. Consequently, charitable organizations must ensure that their operations are open and transparent so that the public can respond to clear, identifiable needs and proven results.

Lastly, the initial outpouring of support will fade. Unfortunately, many of the problems that resulted from the attacks will still be around in the years to come. Our counterparts in Oklahoma City shared their experience in responding to the bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building; we learned that seven years later they are still working with some families. We also learned that anxiety and fear will require long-term mental health and grief counseling (for as many as 10 years). Grantmakers and nonprofits must spread this message in their community and encourage people to continue to give.

This report is part of our effort to document the Washington area's philanthropic response to the September 11th terrorist attacks. Our goal is to record the community's successes and failures so that other regions facing a similar event in the future may benefit. The report is a compilation of briefs written by community leaders who were at the forefront of the philanthropic and relief efforts. It captures their individual perspectives on the year following the attacks, the "lessons learned", and the challenges their organizations have experienced since September 11, 2001. Although no two crises will ever be the same, and no two communities will have the same needs, we hope these key lessons from the past year will help inspire, educate, and prepare other cities.

From the terrible tragedy of September 11 came a tremendous show of the power of philanthropy and the nonprofit sector in responding to critical community needs. In today's lagging economy, funding is down, while the demand for services continues to rise. Nonetheless, the leaders in the Washington area's philanthropic sector—public, private, and nonprofit institutions, and individuals—continue to value effective collaboration and collective support. My only hope is that we learn and grow from the experience as we work to create a society of life-long givers who understand the importance and necessity of effective, responsible philanthropy.



Kae Dakin
President, Washington Grantmakers

September 11th: lessons learned

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FEMA and the events of 9.11

FEMA and the events of 9.11

Joe M. Allbaugh, *Director, Federal Emergency Management Agency*

The events of September 11 and the unthinkable terrorist acts perpetrated against the citizens of this great nation are indelibly etched in our collective memory. As we now all sadly know, the twin towers at the World Trade Center complex collapsed after being targeted by two hijacked commercial airliners, and four other buildings partially collapsed. Several nearby buildings also suffered extensive collateral damage. After the World Trade Center attack, another hijacked plane was deliberately crashed into the Pentagon and a fourth hijacked plane crashed in Somerset County, Pennsylvania. Our nation's response to these terrorist attacks was swift and is unprecedented in America's history.

I was attending the National Emergency Management Association Conference in Montana with state emergency management directors from across the country when I first learned of the attacks on the World Trade Center in New York City and the Pentagon in Arlington, Virginia. I immediately returned to Washington, D.C. to assist President Bush in leading the nation's response and recovery efforts.

Minutes after the first hijacked airplane hit the World Trade Center, I activated a full Emergency Support Team at FEMA's National Interagency Emergency Operations Center in Washington, D.C. Federal officials immediately began arriving at the center to coordinate the nationwide response and recovery effort. At the same time, I activated FEMA's 10 regional operations centers and a backup Emergency Support Team at our Mt. Weather facility in Berryville, Virginia. Both Emergency Support Teams operated around the clock, working 12-hour shifts.

Shortly after the incident, the lead for disaster response and recovery was transferred to Disaster Field Offices (DFOs) in New York City and in Arlington, Virginia. To support response activities in New York, mobilization centers were established at McGuire Air Force Base in New Jersey and Stewart Air National Guard Base in New York. Additional operating centers were established in the two states. The Anacostia Naval Air Station in Washington, D.C. served as a mobilization center in support of the Pentagon operation. These centers supported the staging and movement of personnel, and needed supplies and equipment into the affected areas. FEMA's Urban Search and Rescue Task Forces played a critical role in our response. Twenty-six of our 28 task forces responded to the Pentagon and New York disasters.

Responding to the tragic events of September 11, 2001, the President immediately signed a major disaster declaration for five counties in New York.

The disaster declaration was amended on September 27 and again on October 2, making all counties in the state of New York eligible for some form of federal disaster assistance in the wake of the terrorist attack. The President also declared a major disaster in Virginia to trigger a broad range of Stafford Act response authorities. In addition, the President declared an emergency for all 21 counties in New Jersey. These declarations authorized federal programs that provide public assistance and assistance for families and individuals.

The level of cooperation and professionalism exhibited by all of the federal, state and local personnel and emergency responders has been outstanding. I am pleased by the dedication, abilities, and sheer will of the FEMA employees, rescue workers, officials from all levels of government, representatives of private businesses, volunteers, and others who are working together to help in the aftermath of this tragedy. It won't be easy, but I know that we will prevail in the recovery effort because of the spirit and dedication of all of these people. Some 1,800 federal workers were deployed to New York to support the disaster response, about 800 from FEMA, and almost 1,000 from other federal departments and agencies. In addition, offers of support had been received from 59 countries around the world and the European Union.

A great deal of our recovery focus has been—and remains—helping individuals impacted by the disaster. Our community relations teams

went door-to-door in Lower Manhattan to distribute information and answer questions. FEMA coordinated services with other federal agencies and voluntary organizations, and we greatly extended the application period to ensure all those affected were able to seek aid.

The terrorist attacks, and the focus on homeland security that followed, have greatly affected FEMA. While the agency has always deployed an “all hazards” approach to disasters, both natural and manmade, the carnage of the terrorist attacks and the unprecedented threats to the nation have refocused much of FEMA’s efforts. We have distributed nearly \$17 million in grants to states for terrorism consequence management and implemented a program to help communities improve their terrorism preparedness by assessing their emergency response capability. Our Office of National Preparedness is working closely with the Office of Homeland Security to strengthen training, planning, and exercises related to terrorism.

While meeting the extreme challenges of the September 11th events, FEMA is also looking to the future. The agency is expected to join other federal agencies in the proposed Department of Homeland Security, and to coordinate its efforts even more closely with other offices with similar homeland security missions. We are also looking closely at specifics of the response effort to pinpoint areas that need to be strengthened or changed.

One area that needs attention is the issue of first responder communication. The mere fact that jurisdictions and organizations many times have separate and distinct communications capabilities and use different systems makes operational communications, at times, almost impossible.

Since September 11, I have visited the disaster sites repeatedly. I am always amazed and gratified by the cooperation and the coordination of all of the workers, whether federal, state, local, or volunteers who, shoulder-to-shoulder, are working long and hard hours. Each time I visit, I also remember that I am entering a crime scene, as well as a memorial site. Workers there have worked diligently, but also with a great deal of respect. These workers, these heroes, put themselves at risk trying to help their brothers and sisters. It was tough duty, and these are unique and special individuals who are called to this work. I am concerned about the victims, the brave firefighters, and emergency and policy personnel who have worked so hard under extremely difficult conditions. We owe all of them an immense amount of gratitude and thanks.

There is no doubt that the disaster response and recovery will be a long-term process, but the President has said that we will provide whatever assistance is needed to get the job done. FEMA will be there as long as needed. We will continue to work closely with New York City and the states of New York, Virginia, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania to complete this mission. ■

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preparedness is not a once a year thing—it's something to assess everyday.

Linda C. Mathes, Chief Executive Officer, American Red Cross of the National Capital Area

Just before 10 a.m. on September 11, 2001, local television crews reported that smoke was billowing out of what looked to be a large hole in the Pentagon. Like the rest of America, the volunteers and paid staff at the American Red Cross of the National Capital Area monitored the unfolding events on television. A cadre of volunteers prepared for action. Feelings ranged from outrage and disbelief to sadness and confusion. Unconfirmed reports of additional incidents at the Capitol and the White House flooded our phone lines. Pagers and cell phones echoed in everyone's ears, and we braced for the reality of what we faced.

When reports came in that it was, in fact, a plane that hit the Pentagon, thus linking our city to the incidents in New York and in Pennsylvania, I'll never forget the fear on people's faces. But I'll also never forget how this fear was overcome by determination and an eagerness to respond. When Americans everywhere tried to find ways to help, I felt proud and fortunate that thousands of Red Cross volunteers in this community were prepared to do just that. On that Tuesday morning, the Red Cross mission—to provide relief to victims of disaster and to help people prevent, prepare for, and respond to disasters and emergencies—felt more important than ever. I soon realized that terrorism would test our organization, and continue to test all of us for months and years to come.

When the attacks took place, I was meeting with District of Columbia Police Department officers discussing our community partnership. Agreeing that we should wrap up the meeting immediately, I remember feeling a need to remain very steady. I went back to my office and began to assess the situation. Community leaders from nonprofit and for-profit organizations called to offer

assistance; these calls would continue over the next few days and even weeks. While I delegated tasks, such as making sure that each person in the building was accounted for and that we had a sufficient water and food supply, our director of emergency and international services, Charles Blake, activated the Chapter's disaster response plan with certain restrictions.

Charles put mass care volunteers on alert status and mobilized resources for feeding and sheltering. He also mobilized disaster mental health volunteers to manage the psychological impact on everyone involved, including emergency workers, victims' families, and Red Cross volunteers. When emergency personnel determined that the scene was safe, Red Cross volunteers drove the Chapter's mobile command center to the Pentagon, and began to put into place the framework for a large-scale disaster relief operation.

In those first few days after the disaster, I went to the Pentagon and saw emergency workers wearing oxygen masks, covered from head to toe in what looked like outfits straight out of a 1950's science-fiction movie. Tasked with retrieving victims' bodies, the emotions of what these men and women witnessed remained evident in their faces long after shifts ended. As emergency workers emerged from the ruins of the charred building, the fundamental importance of the Red Cross mission resonated in

my heart and in my mind. I watched as Red Cross volunteers helped soothe bruised souls by offering something to drink or eat, or even just someone to talk to, and managed the logistical needs of all the agencies involved.

Over the course of the next several weeks, Americans responded to this unprecedented disaster in unprecedented ways, waiting in line to give blood and donating millions of dollars to a variety of organizations and relief funds. While the National Capital Area Chapter of the American Red Cross remained focused on providing services to people affected by the attack on the Pentagon, the National Headquarters of the American Red Cross became ensnared in controversy surrounding donations to the Liberty Fund. Although the Red Cross initially wanted to use a portion of these funds to help with preparedness initiatives in communities across the country, the organization listened to the American people who wanted these dollars to go directly to victims and their families. I was deeply impressed that in the midst of all this scrutiny, our volunteers remained mission-driven, and focused on providing Red Cross services to people in need.

The controversy resulted in the national organization's implementation of bold new fundraising practices while our Chapter focused on providing the highest level of service to our community. In addition to our support of the relief operation at the Pentagon, our Chapter continued

to respond to a host of other disasters, including the anthrax incidents throughout the area, fires, flooding, severe storms, tornadoes, and two train derailments. We made a conscious effort to carry on “disaster business as usual”, and found that the community was more receptive than ever to information on preparedness.

In response to community requests, our Chapter implemented a program called Facing Fear that trained nearly 75 DC public schoolteachers on how to help young people cope with disasters and terrorism. We worked to develop an emergency preparedness toolkit for small to medium-sized businesses that we will launch this fall. We also placed an increased number of automated external defibrillators (AEDs), a device that shocks a sudden cardiac arrest victim’s heart back into normal rhythm, in area businesses: from two placements last year to nearly 75 this year.

During this time of activity serving others, our Chapter inadvertently delayed service to ourselves. Typically, Red Cross volunteers go through exit counseling when they leave a disaster assignment. Unfortunately, our employees did not go through this process until some time after the initial disaster. But it’s issues like this that reinforce the important lesson that you can never be too prepared. Preparedness is not a once a year thing—it’s something to assess every day.

Since the events of September 11, we have increased our preparedness and ability to respond to large-scale disasters in two major ways. In July 2002, the volunteer leadership of the National Capital Chapter and the Montgomery County Chapter of the Red Cross came together and determined that merging two financially strong chapters would lead to an increase of resources, better enabling the newly formed American Red Cross of the National Capital Area to provide services to the community. Additionally, the Chapter has collaborated with the other Red Cross chapters in the area to create one Washington Metropolitan Area disaster response plan. While our Chapter had a disaster response plan in place prior to September 11, the magnitude of what we witnessed at the Pentagon required a seamless multi-chapter response.

As we move forward, 9/11 will serve as a metaphor for an unspeakable event that requires an extraordinary response. While many people consider 9/11 to be our country’s darkest day, it can also be said that it was a beacon that brought people together. My passion for involving people in the mission of the Red Cross will be forever fueled by what I witnessed: individuals and organizations that crossed the boundaries of race, culture, geography, and age uniting in selfless service to our nation and to this community. ■

Pentagon Victims' Fund

pentagon victims' fund

Col. Gregory Mason, U.S. Army (Ret.), *Deputy Director for Finance, Army Emergency Relief*
and **Col. Dennis Spiegel, U.S. Army (Ret.)** *Deputy Director for Administration, Army Emergency Relief*

Army Emergency Relief is chartered to provide emergency financial assistance to soldiers (both active and retired) and their bonafide dependents. Initially following the attack on the Pentagon, we were prepared to perform our chartered mission by assisting those families affected by the attack. We did not have any plans to establish a separate fundraising effort, but on the morning of September 12th, we were besieged with telephone calls regarding donations to help the victims of the attack. Within two days, it became apparent that we had to establish a separate restricted fund to accommodate the needs of thousands of citizens from around the world. Therefore, we established the Pentagon Victims' Fund, with the limited charter to provide emergency financial assistance to the Army victims and their families, and with a secondary mission of providing funding for the post secondary education needs of the surviving children.

The single biggest challenge we faced as a result of the attacks was obtaining the name and contact information for the survivors so we could offer our assistance to them. Initially we established a contact station at the Department of Defense Family Assistance Center, which was established in Crystal City following the attack. However, we were prohibited by the “privacy act” from obtaining name and address information from the Department of Defense. Approximately 30 days after the attack, our Director informed the Vice Chief of Staff, U.S. Army of the situation and he was able to permit some of the information to be provided to us. Since that time we have attempted, without success, to obtain an exception to policy allowing us to have access to this information in future situations of this type.

The second biggest challenge was finding ways to distribute the money to the victims. Due to IRS rules and the individual desires of the survivors, we did not distribute a great deal of money for emergency needs. Most of the funds we have received are earmarked to fulfill education requirements of the surviving children and spouses.

Faced with another situation of the scale and magnitude of September 11, we would implement a number of changes. One change we have already made is to refine our accounting system to better enable us to keep up with the large inflow of contributions; the new system has been successfully installed. We would also hire additional staff (on a temporary basis) to handle the large additional workload that results from such a situation, and would improve our use of website information and donation capabilities. Finally, we would continue a positive and proactive public release of information.

Our advice to organizations that want to be prepared to respond to a regional or national tragedy like September 11 is multi-faceted. First, develop a plan. Second, hire sufficient people to handle the scale of your plan. Third, ensure that your charter is understood by everyone involved, both within and outside your organization, and do not deviate from that charter. Fourth, keep meticulous records. Fifth, do not be afraid to refuse donations that do not meet your charter. Last, but by no means least, aggressively seek contact information about the intended beneficiaries of your fund. ■

Pentagon Assistance Fund: Supporting Our Naval Community

pentagon assistance fund: supporting our naval community

Admiral J. L. Johnson, U.S. Navy (Ret.), *President, Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society*

On the morning of September 11, 2001, the Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society was conducting its weekly staff meeting that includes the four Officers of the Society and all Division Directors. Another staff member interrupted the meeting to tell us what she'd heard on the radio. We were in shock, frozen in our chairs in the conference room with the television showing us the horrific images first in New York, then at the Pentagon. Our organization was among the first of the military relief agencies to staff the Family Assistance Center in the Crystal City Sheraton Hotel. We quickly compiled a directory of military and community resources that became the "bible" for all on-site representatives. Our on-scene, seasoned Caseworkers assisted grieving families in cutting through bureaucratic red tape to get immediate support when it was needed the most. With compassion and a sincere desire to find lasting solutions to the problems facing these special clients, our team reassured the victims' families that they weren't alone. We provided an information bridge to the many resources available to them. Our initial financial support included funds for emergency transportation to bring family members to Washington, D.C. defraying funeral expenses; paying for car repairs; providing funds for basic living expenses; and providing college education grants and paying off outstanding student college loans. From our recent experience (October 12, 2000) following the terrorist attack on USS COLE (DDG 67), we anticipated a call from the Navy leadership, requesting that the Society establish and administer a special Pentagon Assistance Fund. The outpouring of financial support from across the United States, and even significant philanthropic

donations from abroad, were unprecedented. Within weeks of the September 11 tragedy, the Society began to develop a Distribution Policy for the Pentagon Assistance Fund. The document was approved by our Board of Directors in mid-December. This document spelled out the beneficiaries of this fund, and to what purpose this fund would be disbursed. Beneficiaries included surviving spouses and dependent children of the active duty Sailors who died as a result of the terrorist attack on the Pentagon on September 11, 2001. Revenue resulting from the thoughtful and generous donations to the Pentagon Assistance Fund will be used to guarantee financial assistance to cover the cost of tuition, books, and fees for up to four years of post-secondary undergraduate education, or equivalent technical/vocational training. To the extent funds are available after provision for the Fund's beneficiaries, we will also provide the same financial assistance for the surviving spouses and children of Navy and Marine Corps personnel who may die in a theater of combat operations during the war on terrorism (Operation Enduring Freedom).

Our response to the terrorist attacks was swift, but not without challenges. The first challenge we faced was obtaining an accurate and comprehensive listing of all of the Navy casualties suffered at the Pentagon on 9/11. Our interest in obtaining such information was to enable our Society President to communicate with the victims' families and outline

the programs and services available to support them. We overcame this obstacle by providing copies of correspondence to the Navy's Casualty Assistance Calls Officer (CACO) Coordinator. This initial letter (that did not include the name and address of the families involved) was hand-delivered to each family by the CACO assigned. Once an official list of families was available, the Society express-mailed a follow-up letter that identified resources and requested the family contact the Society's Director of Casework.

The Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society is a nonprofit, charitable organization that does not solicit contributions from the public. Therefore, our second challenge was to find a method of notifying the American public that there was an avenue available to channel benevolent donations to assist the families of the Navy victims of the terrorist attack on the Pentagon. We elected to simply place an item on the main menu of our website.

A third challenge resulted from the preponderance of individuals and organizations who contacted the Society with money-making schemes, seeking to partner with us to solicit funds. We had to be polite and professional, but firm and consistent in our resolve not to get involved in such activities.

Finally, there was no way to anticipate the administrative burden put on our small staff in handling the countless inquiries from grateful individuals and organizations, and the tremendous volume of correspondence required to acknowledge

and thank every contributor. At the time the Society closed the Pentagon Assistance Fund on May 1, 2002, we had written more than 4,350 personal letters expressing our appreciation to donors.

The biggest lesson the Society learned from the experience of administering the Pentagon Assistance Fund was the need and value of implementing and maintaining open lines of communication with other agencies involved in helping the victims of such a tragedy. It is critically important to share information and to gain assurance from other organizations that “our” beneficiaries are informed and are getting access to all of the resources available to them.

Other lessons include anticipating the administrative burden associated with administering such a fund; the need to be impartial and consistent in dealing with organizations who seek ways to conduct fund-raising activities designed to support the fund; and the value of having easy access to competent Navy legal counsel. Additionally, the Society should have immediately brought in extra administrative support to deal exclusively with the correspondence and telephone calls associated with this activity.

We offer a variety of suggestions to organizations looking to better prepare for a regional or national tragedy. It is essential to “stick to one’s knitting”—be true to the purpose of your organization. Also, be

cautious in expanding the mission of your organization. Before accepting unsolicited funds, agree on a framework and methodology for the disbursement of those funds. Don’t become lax or opportunistic but try to be open and consistent. Agree on the beneficiaries and parameters for disbursement. Be able to articulate to potential contributors in clear language, precisely how their donation will be used. And lastly, at the outset, have a senior public affairs professional brought into the equation.

The Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society has been providing a helping hand to active duty and retired Sailors, Marines, and their families since 1904. Our paid employees and volunteers have given compassionate, responsive, and enthusiastic financial support to tens of thousands of clients each year. We were fully qualified and capable of performing this service before 9/11, and channeled that experience into our response in the aftermath of 9/11. The structure of our organization was not changed by the terrorist attack on the Pentagon. However, I’m confident that every member of Team NMCRS is more sensitive to the frailties of life, more appreciative of the freedoms we enjoy in America, and more aware of the sacrifices required to preserve that freedom. ■

A Year to Rebuild

a year to rebuild

Siobhan Canty, *President and Chief Executive Officer, Greater DC Cares*

We watched the Towers fall as we huddled around a small television in our offices—sirens rushing to the Pentagon screamed by our open windows. I sent everyone in our office home. People filed out, looking as uncertain and off-balance as I felt. Our world had suddenly changed and we were no longer sure of our place in it.

As Washington, D.C.'s volunteer center, it was clear that Greater DC Cares would have a critical role to play in the disaster response efforts in our region. It was not so clear from within our fog of shock, however, just what that role would be.

By noon I was alone in our offices. That's when the phones started ringing. I talked to dozens of people: CEOs of local businesses, executive directors of community organizations, and individual volunteers calling to offer help.

It became clear that organizations like the Red Cross, William Wendt Center for Grieving and Loss, and the Salvation Army, were already handling the frontline of response, but they could not do it all. They needed help caring for the injured, feeding fire fighters and police officers, and counseling those who had lost loved ones. The frontline did not have the capacity to respond to all of the people who were aching to contribute.

This is when Greater DC Cares' roles began to emerge clearly. We would serve as the central place for volunteers to register for opportunities to serve, to express grief and unity, and to get information about the status of response efforts and the needs of our region's nonprofits. We would provide frontline organizations with support in volunteer management. This freed the frontline to focus on the crisis work at hand and to have access to volunteers as they needed them. We would connect nonprofits and volunteers. Our position forged the links to help our community begin to heal.

First thing the next morning, our staff returned motivated to make a difference at this critical time. We sent out an e-mail to let folks know that they could register with us to volunteer. By 3 p.m., we had more than 3,500 people signed up.

In a masterful display of a lack of planning, it only then occurred to us that each e-mail would have to be answered manually. That, I now recall, was my only real moment of panic in what turned out to be a month long redirection of this organization's resources. At that point, e-mails were arriving at a rate of one every four seconds.

With our fingers crossed, we reached out to our friends at webMethods—a large software technology firm in Northern Virginia. Without hesitation, they stopped work and, overnight, built an online automated registration system that allowed volunteers to register their skills. But by the time the site went live, we had already received more than 8,000 e-mails. What were we going to do with those? So we made another call to our friends at Cisco Systems, and again without hesitation, hundreds of their employees stopped what they were doing to enter them into the new system.

In the meantime, employee volunteers from the Society of Human Resource Managers and Venable Law Firm called the frontline nonprofits to make sure they had all the help they needed.

We received e-mails from every state and all over the world. People in Canada, Mexico, the UK, Italy, Germany, Brazil, and India responded to our message. We had forklift drivers, doctors and nurses, mental health professionals, volunteer fire fighters, and many people who said the only skill they had to donate was love for their community, love for their country, and willingness to do anything asked of them. One man wrote, "I am a disabled American

Veteran. I am limited in what I can do, but I am willing to do anything to help out and I will push myself to my limits and beyond...”

We were able to connect 3,000 of them to volunteer opportunities. We referred thousands more to their local volunteer centers. In the weeks following 9/11, we communicated with all of them consistently to keep them informed about the efforts that were taking place at the Pentagon and around the region.

In hindsight, there were ramifications to our decision to respond as we did that I had not considered at the time. By year end, the entire staff was exhausted. We struggled to meet our fundraising goals for annual events because we missed the critical fundraising period. We were in the midst of a strategic planning process that was sidelined. And, I think there were probably some budding relationships that weren’t developed as we found ourselves in the biggest disaster response effort in our nation’s history.

But would we do it again if a regional disaster happened again? You bet. In fact, we are preparing for it.

Our disaster response worked. The relationships we had built with companies and nonprofits, our reliance on technology, and the trust our volunteers had in us all came together well. It added up to a powerful response for our region that we never could have planned for. We learned, with concrete evidence, that this region has everything it needs to address critical community issues. When we all come together, the power of our collective action is unstoppable.

Has 9/11 changed the way we do business? Not fundamentally. At the same time, it has changed the way we look at our work forever. We are venturing into a new area of programming—emergency response management, coordinating volunteer efforts across the region. All of our other programs are operating much in the same way they were before 9/11. And this is good news. We do the same work now that blindly prepared us so well for September 11. Our work helps connect people to people and resource to need. The trust we have in the power of that service has only been magnified by this experience. ■

Local Labor – Among the First Responders

local labor – among the first responders

Kathleen D. McKirchy, *Executive Director, Community Services Agency of the Metropolitan Washington Council, AFL-CIO*

“While monies are pouring in to aid the families of victims and to aid those directly injured in the attacks, we do not hear nearly as much about aid to the many working people [who have] lost their jobs [and] are nonetheless also victims. From my apartment here in Crystal City I have looked across to the airport’s bright new terminal... devoid of traffic. In place of background hum, and the occasional roar from planes I [hear] nothing much at all... I still think about the men and women who are unlikely to be called back to work anytime soon.”

These sentiments were expressed in a letter from one of our donors in early October 2001. It reflects the concerns of many in the labor movement since the beginning of the recovery efforts—what about the workers?

While it was logical and necessary for the initial focus to be on direct victims and their families, it took some time before the attention broadened to include the needs of the tens of thousands of workers in the Washington metro area who were also adversely impacted through job loss.

Most of the industries affected by 9/11 in the metro area—ground transportation, hospitality, airlines, and the airports—are unionized industries. From early on, unionized workers in these industries were able to take advantage of the labor network already in place, which included the AFL-CIO's Community Services Agency of the Metropolitan Washington Council. With our capacity for providing social services and emergency financial assistance to working families, we provided much needed help to workers affected by the crisis. Any worker, union or not, who could demonstrate that they had been employed by an employer directly or indirectly affected by 9/11, and who could also demonstrate financial need, could come to us for help. We extended our program to workers facing evictions, utility cut-offs, lack of food, COBRA payments, and other vital necessities.

Before 9/11, a staff of two was able to handle the 175 workers annually who came to us for help. After 9/11, 75-100 new clients per day were urgently seeking help. A decision was made to use all donated funds for direct emergency assistance, not overhead, and so, no new staff was hired. To meet the sudden increase in demand for services, we had to focus on two things: the urgent need for more staff to do worker intake, verify needs, and get workers' bills paid; and generating more funds with which to help these workers.

In response to the need for more staff, the Agency first trained staff representatives from Local 25, Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees Union, who turned their entire attention for five months to providing intake services for their 6,000 laid-off members. Ten additional volunteers were trained from the AFL-CIO Solidarity Center, the organization's international program with offices in our building. These individuals provided daily assistance for over two months with many tasks, but they were especially invaluable helping with the large number of non-English-speaking clients. Thirty more volunteers from other local and national unions were trained and helped with clients, paperwork, financial back-up, need documentation, and other tasks.

Generating funds, our next key focus, was actually the easier part, for a change! Thanks to our agency's promotion through the national labor network, the media quickly identified us as an agency focusing on the needs of workers. With our strong connections with unionized businesses and the broad media exposure, funds came our way from a variety of sources—businesses, churches, local and national unions from across the country and abroad, social clubs, veterans' organizations, bowling teams, and hundreds of caring, generous individuals anxious to help. The agency also wrote successful grant proposals to several foundations.

Preventing hunger also became a priority. At our agency's request, 55 unions and other organizations collected several tons of canned and non-perishable food for distribution. At holiday time especially, we had enough food, toys, gifts, and clothing to stock a small department store.

Looking back, our operations could have been improved. We should not have relied only on the use of volunteers. Hiring an experienced social services worker on a temporary full-time basis would have streamlined and expedited our efforts, and reduced the stress on regular staff. Funding specifically to help agencies increase their capacity early on in a crisis is critical.

Our agency, and our sister agencies, would have benefited from more coordination, sharing of information, and knowledge of what each other's capabilities and recovery efforts included. Many clients' needs were beyond the capacity of one agency to meet, and having a central source of information on resource availability would have made helping workers much easier, for them and for us.

We are still helping working families who have not recovered economically. Not all have been called back to work; many still work reduced hours. Those who have been called back are seeing increased workloads, as employers try to recoup some losses by getting by for a while with fewer workers. Workers with background or immigration problems that were not considered serious before, are now finding these problems impediments to their rehiring. Many are realizing their need to be retrained to increase their attractiveness and flexibility in changing labor markets, but cannot find needed training resources.

September 11 pointed out some major gaps in our regional support structure. Our agency and the labor movement are anxious to continue the work already started to build a better-prepared, more regionally-coordinated public/private system that will keep our communities and our neighbors afloat during trying times in the future. ■

The September 11th Fund *the september 11th fund*

Norman Taylor, *Chief Executive Officer, United Way of the National Capital Area*

For those of us in the business of helping people, September 11 brought with it a mixed bag of emotions and left behind some valuable lessons. Like most Americans, I was saddened, angry, and frustrated by the events. How could this happen in our backyard to people we personally knew? What could United Way do to help?

It was immediately recognized that community-wide collaboration was needed. Our staff and volunteers needed to be flexible and act expediently to help eliminate and prevent turf battles while enhancing existing relationships with our community partners. It quickly became a labor of love. We opened ourselves up, began meeting with nonprofits, government organizations, and other health and human services providers in our region—creating new relationships and forming the “Metro DC 9/11 Network” to coordinate a collective response.

By September 13, we established the local September 11th Fund, which ultimately received and distributed more than \$4.6 million in donations. Building sound partnerships early on helped us to leverage those dollars and fund 81 grants totaling \$3.1 million to nonprofits providing emergency and support services in the Greater Washington Area. \$750,000 in contributions designated to help victims in New York were sent to the United Way of New York City.

We enlisted a team of experienced local grantmakers and government agency people who not only knew the key service providers in our region, but also knew how to quickly, critically, and efficiently prioritize mountains of applications and separate out the most worthy. Everyone involved agreed that the overarching criteria for the local Fund was “demonstrated need” (not theoretical or speculative need) and the organizational capacity to use funds well, as well as fairness, consistency, and accountability both to the victims and to the donors.

Together, we proceeded to develop and publicize a very simple, user-friendly, and informative one-page grant application with buy-in from community leaders. We then laid out extremely specific funding eligibility criteria and priorities and we announced deadlines that, although appropriately expedited, gave busy nonprofits enough time to complete their applications. Finally, the September 11th Fund's Distribution Committee went to work—bringing to bear its members' knowledge both of the community and of funding realities, and staying doggedly focused on the priorities we had previously announced.

The attack on the Washington community started, of course, when American Airlines Flight 77 crashed into the Pentagon. It continued with the closing of National Airport and the virtual collapse of our hospitality industry—a critical pillar of our local economy, and then shortly afterward, the anthrax siege hit. The most directly impacted victims were those on the airliner and in the Pentagon. But, on various levels, many more people were also victimized.

One of the critical issues that the organization faced was how to define the term “victim”. The magnitude and far-reaching impact of September 11 made this task even more difficult. After thoughtful evaluation, the committees determined that it would be the mission of the Fund to not only meet the needs of those directly affected by the attacks, but to also support the secondary and tertiary victims. This resulted in several rounds of funding. The first round went to aid the “primary” victims—those who were in the Pentagon or on Flight 77, and their families. This was followed by a

second round of funding where we added another level to “primary” victims—those directly affected by the anthrax attacks. Additionally, in this round, we funded programs dealing directly with the “secondary” victims—those affected by the broader impact of the attacks. Among this group were residents laid off due to the closing of National Airport and the immediate collapse of the hospitality industry in Washington, including workers at the airport itself, hotel and restaurant workers (typically those at the lowest end of the wage scale), and others similarly affected.

Moving forward, we have further committed as an organization and as a community to build the capacity of the human services sector before disaster strikes, to mobilize that capacity when disaster strikes, and to be ready to stay around long after the worst has passed. To carry this out, United Way continues to forge coalitions and partnerships with organizations to strengthen their capacity and to solidify a coordinated approach to solve both acute and chronic community problems.

In closing, one of the greatest lessons learned during this very difficult year, is that as a community we stand undefeated. On September 11, people and organizations throughout the community united and stood ready to put in whatever time, energy, and resources were needed to take care of their neighbors. Looking back over all that has been accomplished by our region's people and organizations like the American Red Cross, Salvation Army, USO, Community Foundation, and the volunteers of United Way, I am truly proud to call myself a Washingtonian. ■

Managing the Gift managing the gift

Terri Lee Freeman, *President, The Community Foundation for the National Capital Region*

Just like most everything else in America, philanthropy is forever changed by the events of September 11, 2001. Since the 19th century we've known that Americans' generosity is unique—that our desire to help those less fortunate exists. But the 21st century allowed us to see how incredibly generous the human race can be, how we see ourselves connected, one to another. On September 14, the Survivors' Fund—the largest single fund dedicated to supporting the long-term needs of the victims and surviving family members of the attack on the Pentagon—came into existence.

The first lesson to be learned is that the establishment of such a fund to support, in this instance a national disaster, is not a solitary act. The Survivors' Fund was accomplished because of our partnership with local funders, our local United Way, and the Washington Post.

The second lesson to be learned is that public generosity and public scrutiny are two sides of the same coin. Immediately following the tragedy the media called us nonstop to find out what we were doing (to get the facts behind the Fund). The tone of those calls changed within three weeks to wanting information about

how the money would be distributed. I must say that the concept of “long-term” fell on deaf ears. It was expected that the dollars would simply be divided up and distributed to the families in even proportion. The issues of need and making sure the monies were distributed effectively were not the critical concern. Thus the third lesson, be open and honest with the media and communicate to/with them frequently.

In those early weeks following the tragedy, and before the anthrax scare, we made a naive assumption that we would receive maybe \$5 or \$6 million to the Fund. But with Fannie Mae’s single contribution of \$5 million, we knew that the Fund would probably make it to \$10 million. We are now managing a fund that took in more than 20,000 individual gifts, totaling close to \$20 million.

This raises the question: when is enough, enough? To answer it, I think we have to look at why people give in these circumstances. Subtracting corporate contributions, which were by far the bulk of the money that we received, individuals contributing to this Fund were performing heartfelt acts of charity. People contributed because they needed to do

something. Most Americans were not in a position to move rubble, or cook meals for rescue workers, or escort Muslim or Middle Eastern women to and from the store, but they could write a check. Children could have penny drives, sell lemonade, or contribute their allowance. The act of giving made people feel better. Giving (philanthropy) helps us heal. While we have been able to redirect some corporate contributions to areas of need that had received no funding, it would be difficult to return a check to a \$250 contributor. What I think is most important is that the mission of the fund be honored fully and totally. This leads me to lesson number four, develop a clear mission or purpose for the fund.

I don’t think the state or federal government is in the position of distributing philanthropic dollars any better than private philanthropies. What I do think the public sector could assist with is coordination of charitable activities. Since the Federal Emergency Management Agency is usually one of the first public agencies on the site of a disaster, it seems that they could take more responsibility for further coordinating the multiple activities of direct service providers such as the Red Cross, as well as private

philanthropies such as the Survivors' Fund. In the case of September 11, it has been difficult to keep up with the proliferation of charitable funds available to the victims, but the development of a standard software package or database to help agencies manage this information would be useful. The design of such software would be an opportunity to see public/private partnership in action.

I do think the needs of survivors of such horrific acts as September 11, Columbine, or the bombing of the Murrah federal building, require multiple sources of relief. All communities should be prepared with a combination of public and private dollars to support these families. And we should recognize that we cannot buy away grief, but that monetary resources must be supplemented with individual counseling. Lesson number five is that we must understand that money is simply a means to the end of helping people rebuild their lives.

While there have certainly been missteps in how we deploy such large sums of money to individuals affected by September 11, the fact is that we had never had to deal with this situation before.

The prior cases of terrorism I mentioned above were limited to a significantly smaller population. The authorities apprehended the perpetrators of the terrorism relatively quickly following the event, so there was a noted beginning and end. September 11 was a beginning, but we don't know when the end will come.

The Survivors' Fund was always intended to meet the long-term needs of the survivors, but what we discovered, relatively quickly, was that these families had immediate needs that were not being met by any other charitable funds or insurances, and that our dollars could most effectively be used in the short-term. With that said, I would identify our sixth lesson as maintaining a certain amount of flexibility within mission.

Finally, and possibly the most important lesson learned is that those of us who have had the unfortunate experience of collecting and distributing disaster relief dollars have the responsibility to document our experiences and help other communities prepare for the unthinkable. ■

Emergency Planning for the National Capital Region

emergency planning for the national capital region

Michael C. Rogers, *Executive Director, Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments*

On September 11, 2001, the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) was transformed into an organization that would serve the region in more ways than we had previously imagined. The skill of this planning agency became critically important as local governments prepared to guide citizens through terrorist attacks that ripped through the Pentagon, killing hundreds, and then threatened thousands more with the anthrax scare. In the wake of the tragedy, COG had a role to play both in helping the area recover from the attack and in leading local officials as they prepared for future emergencies. COG became a magnet that was able to draw the region together.

The Council's response on the day of the attack was key to shaping its role. COG contacted local officials from around the region and sponsored a conference call that helped them reach a joint decision to close most of the area's schools and many of its offices the next day. The decision eased the minds of many families. COG and its members also realized the critical importance of communication to safety and security.

Later in the month, COG worked with the region's elected officials as they called on the President and Congress to re-open National Airport, the only airport in the nation that was closed for an extended period after the attacks. City and county council members from across the region pushed for the re-opening to help jump-start the economy and its important tourism industry.

It didn't take long, however, for local officials to recognize the region's main challenge as a result of September 11. Police and fire officials in Arlington County, Virginia and from around the region used COG's system of mutual aid agreements to respond rapidly and very professionally to the attack on the Pentagon. Nonetheless, there were serious gaps in communication between federal, state, and local officials. Many of the responding police and fire officials used different kinds of radios to communicate, making communication at the scene of the attack difficult.

The lack of coordination in releasing federal office workers led to massive gridlock on the roads. The Office of Personnel Management released 180,000 federal employees without realizing the problems that would result because the Secret Service had cordoned off streets around the White House, the State Department, and Capitol Hill. When workers headed home toward Maryland and Virginia, they found two of the major thoroughfares into and out of Washington, D.C., the 14th Street Bridge and the Roosevelt Bridge, closed.

In order to solve those problems, the Council of Governments brought together federal, state, and local officials and the private sector to develop a Regional Emergency Coordination PlanSM (RECPSM). The COG Board of Directors' Task Force on Homeland Security outlined the plan as one that would eliminate the communication and coordination problems revealed by the attack on the Pentagon. The region's elected officials have worked diligently over the last year with consultants and the COG staff to complete the document.

Washington Grantmakers was one of the first organizations to understand the importance of the COG effort and to offer us support. The \$75,000 grant from Washington Grantmakers' Community Capacity Fund was a key element in helping COG attract another \$100,000 from the private sector. The combined grants helped us convince the federal government that COG's role was critical to regional and national security. As a result, we received about \$5 million in federal funds for our planning process.

The heart of the regional plan, the Regional Incident Communication and Coordination SystemSM, is known as the RICCSSM. The system will allow regional leaders to contact each other and coordinate their efforts within 30 minutes of an emergency incident. The officials connected by the RICCSSM will be able to contact each other and arrange for a general conference call using pagers, cell phones, or computers.

COG also recognized the need to align its plan with the structure the federal government uses to address emergencies. As a result, the Board has worked closely with U.S. Homeland Security Director Tom Ridge, and the emergency management directors in Maryland, D.C., and Virginia. Each section of the RECPSM corresponds to a similar section in the structure used by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). COG was careful to devise an all-hazards emergency plan that can be used during emergencies like the tornadoes that ravaged several of our suburban Maryland towns this year, potentially disruptive political demonstrations and marches, and even the occasional threat of a suicide jump from one of our major bridges.

The Council was fortunate to have achieved a very important element of its emergency plan just days before the terrorist attack. COG's regional Health Officers Committee developed a planning guide for the region on how to deal with bioterrorism or what was then called simply a "bio-event." The region's health officers used the plan to communicate with each other and share critical information during the anthrax attacks in the Washington region. The health officers considered their preparation extremely valuable and have remained in regular contact via e-mail and conference calls throughout the year.

The terrorist attack on the Pentagon and the anthrax attacks have taught us that as a community we are

vulnerable, but at the same time, it has reminded us that we are a strong and resourceful community. The private sector, represented by the Potomac Conference, an affiliate of the Greater Washington Board of Trade, was a valuable partner in developing the RECPSM and the nonprofit and volunteer communities also contributed to the plan.

Although COG has reached the end of a major planning process, the organization recognizes that we all stand at the beginning of a new era. The RECPSM must be a living document that is continually tested and updated. Emergency preparedness will become an intrinsic part of every jurisdiction in this region because most emergencies will not allow time to search for and read a manual. We advise regional communities around the nation to create their own emergency plans and to involve all the essential elements of their communities.

The Council of Governments, like so many organizations and individuals in metropolitan Washington, has grown as a result of the terrorist attacks. COG's mantra—the idea that we can make great progress by working together as one region—now has deeper meaning. September 11 was an event that shook the national psyche and reminded us of how privileged we are to live in an open, democratic society. It reinforced for all of us the need to safeguard those freedoms.

The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments has pledged to remain vigilant for this great and vibrant region that is our home. ■

relationships, relationships, relationships
relationships, relationships, relationships

Hope Gleicher, *Chair, Community Capacity Fund Steering Committee*
and **Chuck Bean**, *Program Director, Community Capacity Fund*

Last October, the Ford Foundation staff reached beyond the grief in their hometown to ours, and presented Washington Grantmakers with \$1 million to mitigate the tragic and terrible effects of the September 11 terrorist attack on our local community. The Community Capacity Fund (CCF) was established to administer these funds. The purpose: To strengthen the ability of organizations in the greater Washington region to respond to the aftermath of September 11, and to build the region's capability to respond to possible future disasters.

The strength of our relationships, both old and new, provided the bedrock of the CCF and enabled us to move expeditiously and effectively to fulfill our mission. We were also blessed by the impulse of everyone involved to perform "tikkun olam" (repair of the world). People brought their best ideas to the deliberations and a spirit of cooperation permeated every action.

Since our launch in November 2001, the CCF awarded 32 grants totaling \$1.4 million, in three priority areas:

- Skills training and other programs to re-employ dislocated workers in industries affected by the terrorist attacks
- Advocacy organizations striving to expand the public sector safety net for dislocated workers in affected industries
- Collaborative efforts to prepare for, and respond to, disasters in the region

The CCF Steering Committee

The success of the CCF Steering Committee in leading a rapid-response collaborative grantmaking process was due, in large part, to our pre-existing relationships. We represented 17 different organizations from communities across our three-state region, ranging from private and family foundations, community foundations, and corporate giving programs, to labor and national research, and management assistance groups. Although our areas of interest and expertise were so varied, many of us had previously crossed paths, and we felt a familiarity, respect, and appreciation for each other, together with a profound commitment to collective deliberation.

We enjoyed nearly perfect attendance at meetings and, clearly, we relied on the skills, talents, expertise, and connections of every single member of the Steering Committee. One brought the director of the Survivors Fund to the table. Another opened our eyes to the challenges facing 25,000 laid off hospitality workers and the response of organized labor. Others connected the CCF to the business community. Others brought in new contributors to the fund, including the Japan Relief Fund, the New York Times Foundation, America Online, and the Washington Business Journal.

In the cases where the CCF Steering Committee did not have a relationship, we tried to take the first step towards establishing one. We got to

know our local representatives from the Federal Emergency Management Agency. We deepened our relationship with the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments and helped connect them to other nonprofit partners. We researched the region's information and referral providers. We learned from advocacy organizations such as CASA of Maryland, DC Employment Justice Center, and the DC Fiscal Policy Institute. We reached out to the Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD) in the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia.

CCF Grantmaking

We relied on CCF grantees' pre-existing relationships with their clients. For example, in awarding grants (ranging from \$18,000 to \$100,000) in the skills training category, a key criterion was the organizations' ability to conduct outreach to dislocated workers. The Community Capacity Fund did not try to create new programs, but rather tried to strengthen or grow existing services such as Northern Virginia Family Services' Training Futures and the Construction Opportunities Training Program.

We nurtured CCF grantees' relationships with each other. In the advocacy area, CCF funded the DC Partnership to End Poverty. This is not a new nonprofit organization, but a new collaboration that will bring together a number of important efforts in pursuit of a common agenda, rewearing the safety net. In Northern Virginia, the Tenants & Workers

Support Committee and the Virginia Justice Center received support for a collaborative proposal to strengthen the safety net in Virginia.

We reached out to nonprofit organizations not traditionally funded by the local philanthropic community. We believe that the success of our community's response to future disasters may well depend on many new relationships.

While established nonprofit disaster response organizations, such as the Red Cross and Salvation Army, did an extraordinary job at the site of the Pentagon attack, most now recognize that a new level of coordination is necessary.

The Community Capacity Fund became a champion of the VOAD movement (state-based associations of Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster) by jumpstarting the District's VOAD, strengthening the Maryland and Virginia VOADs, and facilitating communications across all three jurisdictions. CCF also supported the region's six Red Cross chapters by helping them to improve coordination and increase efficiency. Recognizing the need for a comprehensive, high-quality information and referral system for people seeking health and human services, CCF championed the development of 2-1-1 dialing systems that will be compatible throughout Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia.

Capacity Building

There is still a need for organizational capacity building so that our individual nonprofit partners become even stronger and more agile in their response to spikes in demand. In the days after the attack, Greater DC Cares was contacted by 3,500 individuals wanting to volunteer, and CrisisLink received 6,000 calls to its information and referral hotline. Based on our experience, there is an even greater need for "collaborative capacity building"—for groups to work together. In order to really work collaboratively, we must know and be able to work closely with partners in our own sector—funders and providers alike—as well as with partners in government and business.

As we learned from one of our FEMA representatives, "You can't forge a relationship at the time of a crisis, but you can nurture and repair and take care of relationships so that they are in good shape when you need them. In other words, just like we urge communities to practice how to handle hazardous material and mass injuries, we urge you to practice relationships."

So, our advice to ourselves and to other communities: Don't wait for a disaster to practice your community relationships. Ask now: Who needs to be here? Who have we left out of the room? Which relationships need deepening? And above all, how can we work together? ■

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